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# 7 QUESTIONS THAT CAN IDENTIFY A CUSTOMER'S PAIN POINTS

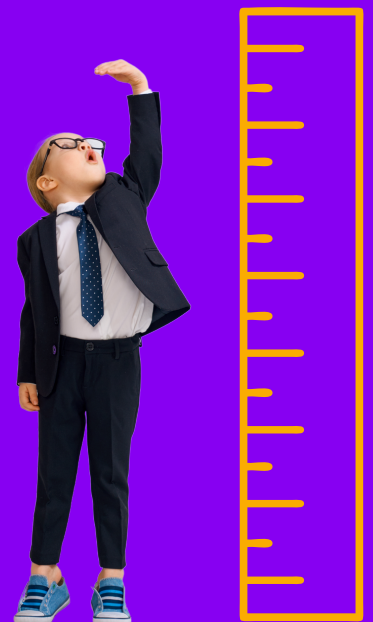


# 1. WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST INHIBITOR TO SHIPPER (OR DIVISION) GROWTH?

Pain point question for: All shipper shipper prospects

This is a classic soundbite that cuts straight to the heart of the matter. Every shipper is in the transportation industry of growth, so the biggest obstacle to growth is generally a serious pain.

Many shipper prospects haven't thought about this at all, so this question builds your personal credibility as well. Helping shipper prospects talk through their current transportation industry situation can increase your understanding of the shipper while demonstrating your expertise in a non-showy way.



Usually, the transportation industry pains fall around revenue, customers, employees, product, or investment capital. Get to the meat of the conversation quickly with these follow-up questions:

"What's your plan to tackle X pain?"

"When is your deadline to solve this problem?"

"Do you think it'll be easy or hard to solve it?"

"Who in your company is working to fix this right now?"

These questions will blow your conversation wide open. By drilling down their responses to any of these, you'll learn a lot about your prospect's pain and spot opportunities to help.

You will also learn how they are approaching their pain. You should hear a certain amount of stress in their voice. This is healthy. It means they are likely to spend money to help address a transportation issue.



## 2. WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST HAIRBALL?

Pain point question for: All shipper prospects  
This is a more whimsical version of question one. I like using it because it has personality, is funny, and creates a vision of chaos.

Most importantly, it'll stir up your prospect's emotion and gets to their core needs.

Whether they're facing a major cross-departmental operational issue, an internal team problem, or a clear obstacle to growth, getting your prospect talking about what they're most frustrated by is a great way to get them excited about a potential solution.

It is also more personal. You're asking your prospect how the pain affects them. Based on their answer, you'll be able to determine if they have a potential personal win that can give you some extra support to get the deal through.





# 3. WHAT DOES YOUR BOSS OBSESS ABOUT?



**Pain point question for: Individual contributors**  
You won't always be talking to the head honcho — sometimes, you'll be speaking to someone two or three levels below them.

It's in your best interest to get them involved in the conversation as early as possible. There are three reasons for this.

They usually control the budget for shipping buying and selling decisions. Their pain won't necessarily be the same as an individual contributor's pain, but they're the one that needs to pull the trigger on a purchase, so start with the decision maker's pain.

A manager's pain usually filters down to her direct reports. While an individual contributor and manager won't view the problem the same way, a win for the manager will usually improve her direct reports' lives as well. A lot of your shipper prospects will have crappy bosses, and getting them off your shipper prospects' backs is a big motivator in the sales process. It signals inexperience. If your contact doesn't know (or think about) their boss's transportation pain, then it might be a sign that they're too junior or inexperienced to help move a deal forward. Use your expertise as a broker to help them and you will win their loads.





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## 4. WHAT TAKES UP THE MOST TIME IN YOUR DAY?

Pain point question for: Individual shipping clerks and managers

This is another angle to approach transportation industry pain that focuses on your point of contact.

You will hear over and over and over again that shippers care more about value than features, and this question reveals the concrete value your service could have to your shipper prospects on a personal level. Ask your shipper prospect about how solving their business pain would impact their team. Would it save them two hours of work a day? Cut their time spent in meetings in half? If you can find something concrete your prospect's itching for, dig deeper and see exactly how you can help.



## **5. WHAT'S BEEN REPEATEDLY DISCUSSED AT STANDUPS SHIPPING MEETINGS BY SENIOR MANAGEMENT?**

Pain point question for: Senior managers and leadership

As mentioned above, transportation industry pain isn't two employees complaining there isn't enough coffee in the break room. It's not something that can be fixed quickly or easily.

Pain is what keeps the CEO of the shipper up at night. It has to be addressed for the shipper to continue operating at full speed.

What do senior managers put on their quarterly planning agendas for their transportation? What do they talk about incessantly in regards to shipping? What do they send emails about? This is the transportation industry pain you're looking for.



## 6. WHAT ARE YOUR GRIPES?

**Pain point question for: All shipper prospects**  
**This might seem petty, but the responses you'll earn with this question can be extremely.**



## 7. WHY ARE YOU LOSING DEALS?

Pain point question for: Individual contributors and managers

Asking this question might uncover positioning pains, process pains, or productivity pains in one of a shipper's most important departments: the sales department.

If you can position your transportation service as something that enables sales or marketing teams to acquire more transportation industry, you can win over those bottom-line-focused decision makers.





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**Thank You!**

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